

C1MCINTOSH, T OGI/GD/ALA 2 G 09 6556 COVEMEX

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ZCZC 06:02:52Z (ST)CO-VE BORDER
25X1~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

STATE

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TOR: 050254Z OCT 82

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RR RUEA IIB
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4367INFO RUESRS/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 9822
RUESON/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 0284
BT

EZ1:

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EZ2:

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO USQAS
E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, CO, VESUBJECT: GOV APPLAUDS COLOMBIAN DECISION TO FREEZE
BORDER NEGOTIATIONS -- BUT NOT MANY COLOMBIANS ARE
CLAPPING

REF: A) CARACAS 9379

- B) FBIS CHIVA CHIVA PN 272229 SEP 82

1. (C) SUMMARY: REFTEL A REPORTED WARM VENEZUELAN

REACTION TO REMARKS BY COLOMBIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
RODRIGO LLOREDA CAICEDO THAT THE GOC HAS DECIDED TO
"FREEZE" MARITIME BORDER NEGOTIATIONS WITH VENEZUELAUNTIL 1984. AMEMBASSY CARACAS COMMENTS THAT "WITH
THE DISPUTE WITH GUYANA OVER THE ESSEQUIBO TERRITORY
SQUARELY BEFORE THE HERRERA ADMINISTRATION, THE GOVHAS NO DESIRE TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH ANOTHER BORDER
PROBLEM TO THE WEST." EMINENT COLOMBIAN POLITICAL
COMMENTATORS MAKE EXACTLY THE SAME POINT -- AND GO ON~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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TO SAY THAT THAT'S PRECISELY WHY THE FREEZE SHOULD NOT EXIST. MORE RECENT REMARKS BY LLOREDA INDICATE THAT NEGOTIATIONS MAY NOT BE SO SOLIDLY ON ICE AFTER ALL.

END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE MOST POINTED OBJECTIONS TO THE "FREEZE" HAVE COME FROM LLOREDA'S IMMEDIATE PREDECESSOR, LIBERAL EX-FOREIGN MINISTER CARLOS LEMOS-SIMMONDS:

- "INEXPLICABLY THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT HAS ACCEPTED THE VENEZUELAN THESIS THAT ONE CAN'T TALK IN A PRE-ELECTION PERIOD, WITHOUT EVER RECOGNIZING THAT VENEZUELA IS PROPOSING SECRET BILATERAL TALKS WITH GUYANA. I CAN'T SEE WHY THE REASONS WHICH THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT ADDUCES, AND WHICH THE COLOMBIAN SO INGENUOUSLY ACCEPTS SHOULD APPLY TO OUR COUNTRY AND NOT TO GUYANA. WITH THIS DECISION COLOMBIA...LOSES THE BEST OPPORTUNITY FOR PRESSURING VENEZUELA INTO A SOLUTION TO THE DISPUTE. WHILE THE VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTRY IS TIED UP WITH THE DIFFICULT TASK OF RESOLVING THE CONFLICT WITH GUYANA, OURS OUGHT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS FAVORABLE JUNCTURE FOR COLOMBIA TO OBSERVE WHAT PROCEEDINGS VENEZUELA PROPOSES TO EMPLOY WITH RESPECT TO GUYANA, AND TO DEMAND AT LEAST EQUAL TREATMENT TOWARDS COLOMBIA. BUT THE FREEZE, WHICH ONLY BENEFITS VENEZUELA, DASHES THAT POSSIBILITY TO THE GROUND, SINCE IT LEAVES THE VENEZUELAN'S HANDS FREE IN THE QUESTION OF ESSEQUIBO WHILE PUTTING THE SOLUTION OF THE (COLOMBIAN) DISPUTE IN PARENTHESES FOR TWO LONG YEARS."

3. (U) LEMOS GOES ON TO NOTE THAT LLOREDA'S REMARKS CONTRADICT STATEMENTS HE MADE TO THE PRESS ON TWO OTHER OCCASIONS IN RECENT WEEKS, TO THE EFFECT THAT "COLOMBIA WOULD INSIST ON THE CONVERSATIONS AND WOULD EVEN SEEK OTHER PROCEEDINGS IF THE CONVERSATIONS DID NOT WORK."

4. (U) CONSERVATIVE EX-PRESIDENT MISAEL PASTRANA, IN AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED COINCIDENTALLY ON THE SAME DAY THAT LLOREDA MADE HIS REMARKS, WROTE THAT IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO FREEZE THE DISPUTE.

5. (U) CONSERVATIVE EX-FOREIGN MINISTER ALFREDO VASQUEZ CARRIZOSA HAS ALSO ANALYZED THE "FREEZE", AND ADVOCATES EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF OUTSIDE MEDIATION IF BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS CAN NOT GO FORWARD. "IN MY JUDGMENT, THERE ARE SUFFICIENT REASONS FOR THINKING ABOUT AN INTERNATIONAL PROCEEDING OF THE VARIOUS KINDS INCLUDED IN THE TREATY OF 1939 ON THE PACIFIC SOLUTION OF COLOMBO-VENEZUELAN DIFFERENCES."

6. (U) REFTEL BE REPORTS PORTIONS OF LLOREDA'S SEPTEMBER 28 RESPONSE TO HIS CRITICS. HE RE-EMPHASIZED THAT COLOMBIA HAS NO WAY OF FORCING THE OTHER COUNTRY TO PROCEED "IF, BECAUSE OF INTERNAL POLITICAL REASONS AT THE MOMENT...VENEZUELA IS UNABLE TO PURSUE DIRECT TALKS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE."

7. (U) LLOREDA'S ORIGINAL INTERVIEW ON SEPTEMBER 26 CONTAINS CERTAIN PROCEDURAL DETAILS OF THE PURPORTED

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FREEZE: "THERE HAS NOT PROPERLY BEEN AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES; THERE IS A UNILATERAL DECLARATION BY VENEZUELA WHICH MERITS OUR RESPECT, BECAUSE WE UNDERSTAND THE POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THIS AFFAIR MOVES." HE CHARACTERIZED THE DECLARATION AS COMING FROM BOTH THE VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER. HE SAID THAT THEY HAD "ALREADY MADE AN ENORMOUS AND UNSUCCESSFUL POLITICAL EFFORT DURING THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION TO ARRIVE AT AN AGREEMENT AS TO THE BOUNDARIES, AND WERE IN NO CONDITION TO MAKE ANOTHER TRY BEFORE THE END OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TERM IN THAT COUNTRY."

8. (U) IN THAT REGARD, LLOREDA SAID HE HAD ASKED THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES TAKE ACTION BEFORE THE HERRERA GOVERNMENT LEAVES OFFICE TO DRAW UP THE TIMETABLE AND THE "RULES OF PLAY" TO WHICH THE EVENTUAL TALKS WOULD ADHERE.

9. (U) IN HIS SUBSEQUENT REMARKS ON THE 28TH, LLOREDA ADDED THAT IT MIGHT BE CONVENIENT NOW TO TAKE TIME TO REEXAMINE COLOMBIA'S NEGOTIATING STRATEGY FROM SCRATCH. HE NOTED THAT THE NEW LAW OF THE SEA TREATY WOULD CREATE A JURIDICAL BENCHMARK FOR CONCEPTS OF DELIMITATION, AND WOULD ALSO ESTABLISH NEW AUTHORITIES FOR DEALING WITH PROBLEMS OF THIS SORT.

10. (C) COMMENTS: LLOREDA'S EXPANDED REMARKS INDICATE THAT, DESPITE ALL THE TALK OF A FREEZE, GOC INITIATIVE ON THE BOUNDARY ISSUE IS NOT EXACTLY ON ICE. LLOREDA, BECAUSE OF DOMESTIC PRESSURE, INTENDS TO EXPLORE AT LEAST TWO COURSES UNPALATABLE TO THE VENEZUELAN: THE LAW OF THE SEA TREATY WHICH THE GOV HAS PUBLICLY REJECTED IN ITS PRESENT FORM; AND A TIMETABLE TO BIND THE NEXT GOV, WHICH VENEZUELAN ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER OSWALDO PAEZ PUMAR TOOK CARE TO DISPARAGE IN HIS OTHERWISE EFFUSIVE REMARKS ON THE FREEZE.

11. (C) GOC PURSUIT OF THESE THEMES WILL CONTINUE TO NEEDLE THE GOV WITHOUT PRODUCING SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS ON THE BOUNDARIES THEMSELVES. IT WILL THEREBY LAY LLOREDA OPEN TO CONTINUED CRITICISM OF THE SORT HE PROVOKED THIS WEEK. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT COLOMBIAN MEDIA CARRIED NO FAVORABLE COMMENTS ABOUT THE FREEZE OTHER THAN LLOREDA'S OWN. MOREOVER, HIS TALK ABOUT THE VENEZUELAN INDISPOSITION "AT THE MOMENT" AND "IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE" IS DISINGENUOUS; TO MOST COLOMBIANS, THE DELAY WILL LOOK A LOT MORE LIKE THE "TWO LONG YEARS" WHICH LEMOS LAMENTS.

12. (C) DURING THAT TIME, THE OVERALL STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL PROBABLY DETERMINE WHETHER SUCH CRITICISM WILL TAKE EFFECT UPON THE GOC. PRESIDENTS BETANCUR AND HERRERA CAMPINS SHARE MUCH THE SAME BACKGROUND AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT IDEOLOGY, AND BETANCUR HAS MADE GOOD RELATIONS WITH

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VENEZUELA A KEYSTONE OF HIS ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN
POLICY. NEVERTHELESS, HE IS ALSO COLOMBIA'S MOST
OVERTLY NATIONALISTIC PRESIDENT IN DECADES. IF
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES SHOULD DETERIORATE,
HE MIGHT WELL LISTEN MORE FAVORABLY TO CALLS FOR ACTION
ON THE BOUNDARY ISSUE. MOREOVER, BETANCUR HAS FOUR LONG
YEARS IN OFFICE AND THE VICTORY OF ADECO IN 1984 WOULD
END AN IMPORTANT RESTRAINT ON HIM. BOYATT

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